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Michael Edwards. altogether disproportionate. Piano and computer.

Citation for published version:

Edwards, M, *Michael Edwards. altogether disproportionate. Piano and computer.*, 2010, Composition, Sumtone.com. <<http://www.sumtone.com/work.php?workid=275>>

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Publisher Rights Statement:

Edwards, M. (Composer). (2010). Michael Edwards. altogether disproportionate. Piano and computer.. Sumtone.com.

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st275.1.69



sumtone

:

michael edwards

altogether disproportionate

for piano and computer

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st275.1.69

sumtone
Neckarhalde 38
D-72070 Tübingen
Germany
info@sumtone.com
www.sumtone.com

programme note

"We are not a young people with an innocent record and a scanty inheritance. We have engrossed to ourselves - an altogether disproportionate share of wealth and traffic of the world. We have got all we want in territory, and our claim to be left in the unmolested enjoyment of vast and splendid possessions, mainly acquired by violence, largely maintained by force, often seems less reasonable to others than to us." (Winston Churchill, 1914)

It is simultaneously satisfying and disturbing to read that such a powerful man as Churchill clearly understood the nature and causes of the staggering disparity of wealth between his country and those from whom it stole. At the same time, and like most of our leaders, it is to our shame that he did so little to redress the imbalance. In fact, writing only five years later about possible solutions to the Iraq problem of his time, Churchill would appear to be quite a different man from the one we might imagine--more related to Saddam Hussein, perhaps: "I am strongly in favour of using poisoned gas against uncivilised tribes", he wrote in 1919.

Altogether disproportionate, no? At the time of writing (October 2010), the proposed cuts to the UK military budget are 8%; those to the higher education teaching budget, 80%. The widely broadcast US military deaths since the invasion of Iraq in 2003 number more than 4300; the almost always ignored Iraqi civilian deaths caused by the war, circa 100,000. The cost to US tax payers of each Taliban fighter's death in Afghanistan? \$50 million, according to one estimate. Such depressing statistics were taxing me whilst writing this piece, along with a Diane Arbus image of one of the 'patriots' she photographed during the Vietnam War. Not the more famous one, with the maniacal expression on his face, but the stiff boater wearer, sporting the almost illegible lapel badge which implores "Bomb Hanoi." Pleasant young man. Proportionate? Hardly.

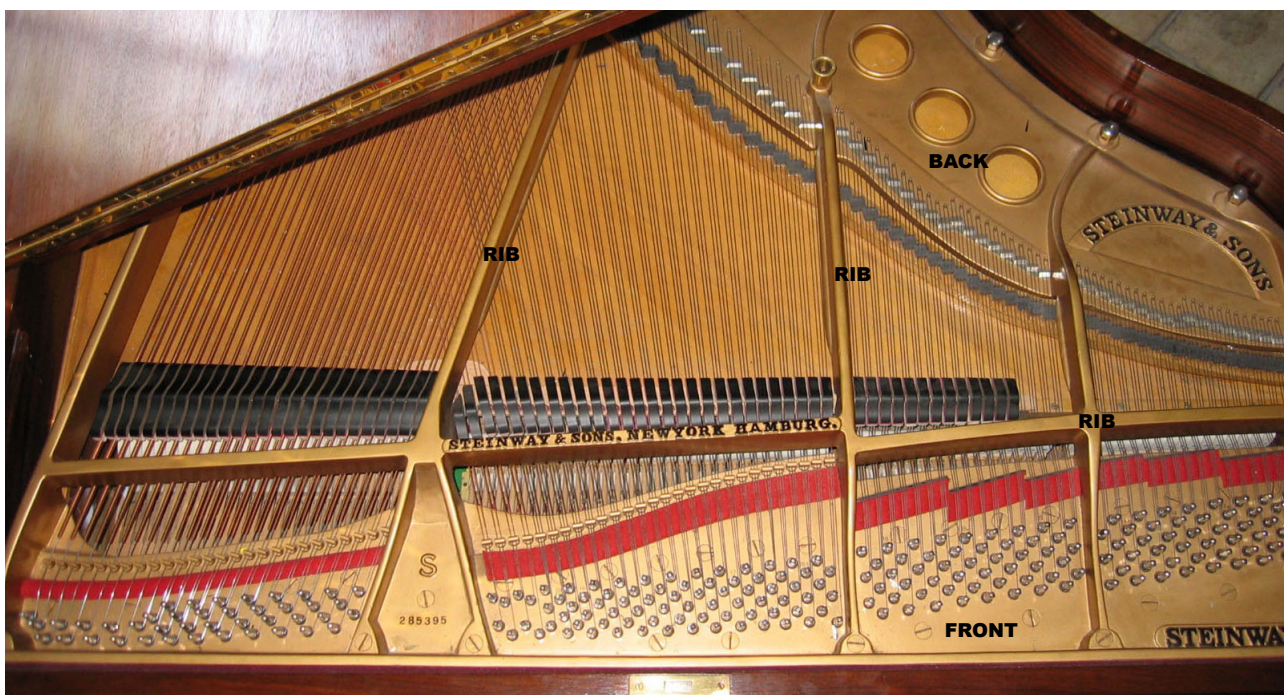
As for the music: Per Rundberg asked for it. He told me he wanted something similar to my ensemble piece, cheat sheet, that he co-premiered in Austria in 2007. He enjoyed--or so he said at least--the very fast tempi that drove the performers to almost skim through the vast array of notes--16000 odd in that piece I believe; only 3000 or so here--careering into each other and into all sorts of unplannable serendipities that are usually found only in free improvisations. He also expressed a desire for music with political content, something that was abundant in cheat sheet. So here we are.

I was further mindful of various conversations Per and I have had over the last thirteen years about works for piano and electronics. It was Per who pointed out to me that one of the difficulties of using amplification is that musicians perform not just in, but with the architectural space of a concert hall; that they learn to project their instrument's sound into that space, and loudspeakers disturb this relationship. So although I nevertheless wanted to write for piano and computer, this time I didn't want to make a piece which demanded amplification through a PA system. My solution was to use loudspeakers under the piano. This allows me to excite the piano's sound board with electronics; mix the instrumental and electronic sources acoustically, in situ, rather than electronically, in a mixing desk; and allows Per to perform without microphones, balancing sound levels according to both the acoustic properties of the piano and the hall he plays in.

I can't resist ending with a quotation from the composer Helmut Lachenmann. His inspiring writings go some way towards explaining the presence here of so much political comment in what should be a simple concert programme note: "The experience of the beautiful is indissolubly connected with making perceptible the social contradictions in our reality; because to make them perceptible is to make them surmountable."

key to symbols

∧	finger nail pluck (or use plectrum if preferred)
+	damp notes(s) with finger(s) near the beginning of the string(s)
⊕	damp notes with the crotale on the strings
♪ x	crotale strike on indicated strings (approx.)
♪ o	crotale turn on indicated strings (approx.; no strike implied)
■ ♪	strike metal body of piano with object: front always metal; rib always knuckle; back always wood; see inside piano graphic for attack points
♪ 	half-depress keys before playing (result always very quiet)
♪ /	slap strings with open palm at the approx. position indicated
tc	tre corde
uc	una corda
res. _____	catch the resonance of the previous attack with the pedal
△	indicates the 3/8 (dotted) portion of a meter such as 7/8
+whooping!	(optional): call out excited screeches of delight (!) at appropriate moments of an indicated passage (ad lib)
↓ 1 (4): 1.01	trigger point at arrow: the numbers indicate trigger number (bar number): sound file
!	beginning of computer-piano synchronisation zone: rhythm/tempo precision essential for synchronisation of the two parts, e.g. letter L: sound file starts with silence but has loud accents in the next bar.



performance requirements

- laptop computer with the performance software (unless Macintosh, this will need MaxMSP 5; 'runtime' version acceptable)
- good quality sound card (stereo output)
- one or two powered speakers positioned under the piano and angled towards the sound board and audience
- stereo analogue volume control knob (optional)
- crotale or finger cymbal with strap for holding, preferably c#, c. 10cm diameter
- megaphone of sufficient power to sound **fff** with loud speech
- wooden implement/block to strike metal piano frame at back

computer setup

A computer is used during the performance to trigger overlapping sound files played on two speakers mounted underneath the piano. These should be angled so that direct sound will reach both the audience and the piano sound board. The concept is to have more of an extended piano than a piece for piano and electronics. Both acoustic and electronic sounds should be localised by the listener as emanating from the same source, rather than from piano and speakers, as is usual in pieces of this sort.

The sound files have been mixed so that they balance well with the live piano at the point in which they are playing. No gain adjustment should be necessary during performance, i.e., no sound engineer (and no PA) is required. There is however provision for setting level curves in each of the sound files. See the readme.txt file that comes with the software for more details about this and other aspects of the playback system.

Overall gain should be set during rehearsal using either the gain slider on the software provided, or, preferably a stereo analogue level control knob (this will offer instant and secure control over levels should the computer or sound card crash). The levels should be set so that the loud sound files at letter O are the same level as the **fff** piano and megaphone voice.

Trigger point arrows (and some cue details: see below) are indicated in the score in blue. The trigger number, bar number, and sound file to be triggered are also indicated for reference (e.g. **36 (666): 1.21** refers to trigger 36 which occurs at bar 666 and starts sound file altogether1.21.wav). Triggering is done by pressing the space bar with the left hand (hence all triggers are at a point where the left hand is free, and the computer should be just to the left of the piano) but a pedal or some other triggering device could be used. Note that some sounds start several beats after the trigger so may not be immediately audible.

Sound file rhythm cues indicated in blue are for orientation purposes only and encompass only the most audible events.

notes

Accidentals carry throughout the bar but are repeated in parentheses as deemed necessary.

Accidentals do not repeat at octaves in either chords or melodic lines.

Bar numbers include repeats e.g. a two-bar phrase repeated three times will increment the bar count by six, not two.

The score presents a mixture of rest bars and pause signs. Rest bars should be counted through with a sense of liveliness, as if the performance is continuing silently. Pauses should be interpreted in the traditional manner, with the actual length determined by the player's taste and the acoustic environment.

The megaphone is used only once (page 23) but should be 'interacted with' during the long pause on page 17 (and at other rest points before page 23 should the performer wish to). 'Interacted with' means something along the lines of picking it up, stroking it, making it visible/showing it to the audience (perhaps with a menacing grin) etc. etc.

Duration c. 18 minutes.

altogether disproportionate

michael edwards 2010

We begin with some silent theatre: Exaggerate piano stool adjustments; when it becomes clear to the audience that this is no longer normal, start moving up and down--only slightly at first i.e. just inches up from stool, then more and more--from sitting normally to reaching inside the piano to strike the strings (first event of score). Be quite fast and energetic about this and the ensuing events of the score, but at the same time nonchalant and 'businesslike' (as if everything were completely normal behaviour). Up to letter E the rests may be filled ad lib with lengthwise string rubbing, either with the fingers/nails or the wooden or metal object. NB If some event combinations prove impossible with the given rhythms/ tempo, move as quickly and fluently as possible (with panache).

Vivo ♩=176

10

20 (pick up crotale)

29 (leave crotale on strings)

39

res. res.

48

pp

56

(pick up crotale)

pp

p mf

(damp with crotale)

res.

64

(leave crotale on strings)

p mf

mf

(leave crotale on strings)

res.

73

f

f

pp

res.

A

8va

82

f

f

p

back

90

f

p

(pick up crotale)

f

f

pp

(leave crotale on strings)

back

98 *mp* *pp* *pp* (leggero) *8va* *back*

2 (100): 2.01

105 *ppp* *pp* (crotale will rattle)

114 *pp*

123 *pp* *pp* *8va* *back*

poco meno mosso (♩=160)

131 *mp* *back* *8va* *3* (136): 3.01

B

139 *mf* *pp* *8va* *back* *15ma* *back* *back* *sim.* *pp*

(crotale strike & lift)

147 back

pp

pp

8va---| 8va-----|

f 4 (153): 2.02 f

154 mf

back

p

(strike | turn & remove)

res. mp

pp

162 back

back

pp

pp

171

rib

pp

mf

8va---| 8va---|

res.

179 8va---| 8va---|

rib

f pp

pp

15ma---| (ord.) rib

pp

pp

186 back

back

rib

pp

(crotale in left hand)

5 (190): 2.03

8vb-----| 8vb-----| 8vb-----|

192

rib

pp

8vb

8vb

Red.

Red.

rib

199

C

rib

rib

front with crotale

mp

pp

front with crotale

front (sim)

front

back

Red.

Red.

Red.

206

rib

back

rib

pp

front

rib

6 (212): 1.02

ppp

Red.

Red.

214

(lay crotale on/around A4)

front ⊕ rib

p

⊕ front

222

rib front

p

sim. ord!

7 (225): 3.02

rib

rib front

mf

p

Red.

Red.

Red.

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E martellato, tenuto (tempo primo: ♩=176)

(an accent implies a tiny break just before in order to prepare)

+whooping!

ms

270

ff

keep resonance of string slaps
(half pedal where necessary)

8^{vb}

5x

276 (277)

p sub

f

p sub (over repeats)

f

mp

ad lib.

little to no pedal

288

stop whooping

mp

294

f

mp

3x

(*mp*)

mf

8^{vb}

301

rit. until F becoming more and more staccato

p

una corda

8^{vb}

306

staccato, leggero

310

315

3x

(over repeats) *mf*

321

p sub

ppp

15^{ma}-----]

326

F remove crotale

pp

12 (326): 1.03

sost → (uc)

13 (334): 1.04

14 (336): 1.05

8^{va}-----]

333

mf

p

pp

mp

pp

339

mp

pp

pp sempre

(sost) (uc) →

344

350

15 (350): 1.06

357

16 (357): 1.07

stringendo

mp

5:4

5:4

363

pp

mp

9/16

9/16

a tempo ♩ = 144

368

mf

pp

mp

pp

mp

p

pp

17 (372): 1.08

8va

res.

tre corde (tc)

374

mp *ffz* *ff* *p* *pp*

pp

8va

8vb

8vb

18 (378): 1.09

379

f p mf pp

Red.

385

△

△

△

19 (388):
1.10

p

mf

385

386

387

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823

824

825

826

827

828

829

830</

402

H **Tranquillo** ♩ = 120

f *ff* *pp* *fff*

21 (405): 1.12

pp *ppp*

409

ppp 22 (410): 1.13

una corda

417

(ppp) *mp* *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp*

23 (423): 1.14

$\frac{1}{2}$ res.

425

mp *ppp* *ppp*

24 (428): 1.15

25 (432): 1.16

tre corde

una corda

8va *sfz*

433

mf *f* *pp* *ppp*

8va *tc uc*

439

f *pp* *ppp* 26 (443): 1.17 *mp* 27 (444): 1.18 *mp*

15ma *tc* *uc*

Più mosso

♩=176



446

28 (448): 1.19

fff **fffz** **pp** **fffz** **pp** **sfz**

pp tre corde

pp sempre

29 (451): 1.20

15^{ma}

Red. →

(15)

453

ff **pp** **f** **pp** **mf** **pp** **f** **pp** **ff**

Red.

458

8^{va}

pp **pp** **ff** **pp** **fffz** **f** **pp** **ff** **sfz** **pp**

una corda

pp **mp** **f** **pp** **mp** **f** **pp**

tre corde

(8)

463

ff **pp** **f** **p** **mf** **ppp** **mp** **fffz** **sfz**

pp **ppp** **tre corde** **pp** **pp**

una corda

(repeating pattern)

30 (466): 3.06

468

8^{va}

ff **pp** **f** **pp** **pp** **mf** **mp** **pp**

pp **pp** **una corda**

(repeating pattern)

473

pp *tre corde* *mf pp* *mp* *ppp*

ppp *una corda* *tc* *uc*

8va (repeating pattern)

477

p *pp* *mp*

tc *uc* *Red.* *sost.*

15ma (repeating pattern)

31 (481): 1.27

Meno mosso ma vivace* ♩=160

482

pp *mp* *p*

Red. *res.*

8va (repeating pattern)

* despite rests, think vivace and imbue the few notes given with that spirit.

490

pp *mp* *pp*

pp *Red.* *res.*

32 (490): 3.07

498

pp *mp*

pp *Red.*

8va (repeating pattern)

33 (499): 1.28

506

ppp *mp* *mp* *ppp* *p* *p* *p*

una corda

(sost.)

8va

514

p *ppp* *p* *ppp* *p* *p*

tre corde

15ma

34 (515): 1.29

(repeating pattern)

521

ppp *ppp* *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp*

una corda

15ma

res.

529

ppp *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp*

15ma

35 (532): 1.30

(repeating pattern)

538

p *pp* *mp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp*

8va *8va*

ppp *pppp*

res.

546

15^{ma}

mp *ppp* *mp*

(uc) *p*

555

8^{va}

pp *ppp* *p*

J

564

15^{ma}

p *ppp* *pp* *ppp*

(uc)

572

p *ppp*

581

8^{va}

p *ppp*

589

ppp *p* *ppp*

598

15^{ma}

pppp *p* *ppp* *pppp*

3

Red. →

608

15^{ma}

pppp

Red. →

616

8^{va}

pp *mp* *ppp* *pppp* *ppp* *pp > ppp*

(uc) *ppp*

Red. →

625

p *pppp* *pp* *ppp* *pppp* *mp* *pp*

pp

→

Red. ad lib.

633

8^{va}

mp *ppp*

3

K

(8)-----

639

ppp 3

pp

△

8va-----

646

ppp *p* *ppp* *ppp*

very long pause
c. 30"

interact with
megaphone

8va-----

654

ppp *p* *ppp* *ppp*

(uc) *pp* *p* senza Ped

Red.

(8)-----

661

ppp *mf* *ppp*

L !

↑ 36 *ff*
(666):
1.21

Red.

667

ppp *mp* *ppp*

ff *res.*

674 *pp ppp* *8va*

680 *ppp* *pp* *mf* *8va* *8vb* $\frac{1}{2}$ *8vb*

(uc)

686 *ppp* *pp mp pp mf* *37 (690): 1.31* *pp* *tre corde*

692 *f ff ffz sfz p mf pp pp* *res.* *pp* *mf*

698 *mpppmppp* *mp f³mp mp f³mf ppp* *15ma* *ppp*

705

mf *mp* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *pp*

38 (706): 2.05

710

p *mp* *p* *pp*

715

pp *una corda*

719

f *ff* *f* *mf* *f*

39 (720): 1.22

! **M** **Più mosso** ♩=176 **Ben marcato** **+whooping!**

tre corde (ped ad lib)

725 (727)

mf *f*

8^{va}

731

f *ff* 3 8vb *f*

735

staccato *p subito e cresc.* 3 8vb

739

1st: 2nd: *mf* *f* 3 8vb

744

p *mf* *mp* *f* *ff* 3 8vb

750

ff sempre *ff* *ff* *ff* 3 *ben marcato, staccato*



756

41 (758): 1.23

(ped ad lib)

760

765 (767)

8^{vb}]

start blurring with pedal more and more until bar 786

772 (774)

8^{vb}]

8^{vb}]

778 (780)

2nd:

8^{vb}]

8^{vb}]

3x

785 (790) (795)

8^{vb}]

Red.

7 ♩

falling apart

stop whooping

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45 (826): 1.26

Free time**O Megaphone**

Hold pedal down and point megaphone into piano to create resonances (or out towards audience, ad lib.). Speak given text loudly (fff with the aid of the megaphone) but without shouting. Aim to have text last as long as the two accompanying sound files (but certainly not longer).

826

"We are not a young peo-ple with an inn-o-cent record and a scanty inhe-ri-tance. We have engrossed

fff sempre

half-peddalling over chords ad lib

832

to ourselves an al-to - ge - ther dis - pro-por - tio - nate share of wealth and traffic of the world.

838

We have got all we want in territory, and our claim to be left in the unmolested enjoyment of vast

46 (838): 1.24

843

and splendid possessions, mainly acquired by vi-o-lence, largely maintained by force, often seem

8^{rb} |

850

less reasonable to others than to us." [long pause after the sound file has ended; just before resonance has died, let pedal off with a thud and move immediately to the next section as if nothing had happened.]

857 **P** (♩=160) *15ma*

pp *una corda* *pedal ad lib* *6*

864 *8va* *3* *6* *16* *3*

870 *8va* *3* *6* *3* *pp* *6* *3*

876 *(15)* *6* *3* *8va* *6* *p* *6* *6*

881 *(8)* *3* *6* *mf* *f* *p* *6* *ff* *p cresc.* *3* *6*

47 (883): 1.32 ↑

885

8va

mf

[illegible]

893

poco cresc.

mezzo voce

ff subito

48 (894):
2.07

(trigger on last ♪ i.e. after pause)

896 *mf* *p* *pp sub mp*

900

f subito

mp

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 3

8va

(8) -----

904 *15^{ma}* *p subito.* *ff* *mf* *pp* *mf*

909 *49 (909): 3.08* *pp sempre* *8^{va}* *8^{va}*

915 *50 (917): 2.08* *una corda al fine*

921 *R*

929 *51 (934): 2.09* *mp* *pp* *sost al fine* *8^{va}*

936

8va

6

16

943

(8)

!

52 (944): 2.10

mp

6

pp

8va

951

8va

15ma

pp sempre

3

3

957

(15)

6

53 (958): 2.11

3

3

963

(15)

6

ppp